



## 94-09-12: Statement of Cyprus, H.E. Mr. Alecos Evangelou

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AS WRITTEN

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER  
OF JUSTICE AND PUBLIC ORDER OF CYPRUS  
MR. ALECOS EVANGELOU  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
CAIRO, 5-13 SEPTEMBER 1994

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Cyprus delegation I would like, at the outset, to

express our warmest congratulations to the President of the hosting country and President of the Conference Mr. I-iosni Mubarak, to the Government and the friendly people of Egypt, and our special thanks for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements for this important international gathering.

Special thanks are also extended to the United Nations Fund for Population activities (UNFPA) for Ks leadership role in this field, and in particular to Dr. Nafis Sadik, Hs present director, for her contribution to the Conference.

The importance of this Conference cannot be overstated. The Conference is taking place at an opportune time, as population issues dominate the international agenda following the historic political changes that have taken place in recent years. The reduction in the ideological confrontation has elevated the importance of socio-economic development.

We welcome the increased attention given to the role of women, since it is our belief that the improvement of their status and their equal participation in decisions affecting their families and other aspects of life are essential prerequisites for the achievement of the goals of this Conference.

Population issues are vital because they are interrelated with education, health services, infrastructure, employment, social peace and security as well as with the environment.

The magnitude of the challenges is evident from the fact that the population of our globe is expected to double by the year 2050, with most of this growth taking place in the poorest countries. While we

realize that individuals and individual countries are at the centre of decision-making, on this complex issue, the strategy is, by its nature, of a global scale.

In Cyprus, at present, there does not exist a serious population problem. The population remains well under one million and the country is not densely populated. Fertility is relatively high compared to the levels prevailing in most other European countries and has been fluctuating around the replacement level.

Since independence in 1960, considerable progress has been achieved in all fields. The population now enjoys a high standard of living, including better education, medical care, and nearly full employment. Mortality has decreased significantly and average life expectancy at birth has risen from 70 years for males and 72 for females in 1973 to 74.6 years and 79.1 respectively for the period 1992-1993.

In mid-1994 the population of Cyprus was estimated at 725,000 including Turkish Cypriots, who now constitute 13% of the total population, compared to 18% in 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus.

Following international trends, we face the problems of urbanization and the ageing of the population. The Government in its effort to reverse these unfavourable trends has taken appropriate policy measures with regard to migration. These include provision of incentives for the repatriation of Cypriots; the reduction of emigration, better employment opportunities and living conditions. The objective of government policies is to increase, or at least maintain, fertility at current levels, by introducing, inter alia, additional measures for the support of large families. Furthermore, special incentives and schemes aim at keeping people in rural areas.

We acknowledge with many thanks the assistance of UNFPA for initiating and carrying out a number of population projects in Cyprus.

The considerable progress achieved, however, was seriously hindered by the Turkish invasion of 1974 when one third of the population was forcibly displaced from their homes by the Turkish army which invaded and still occupies nearly 40% of Cyprus territory .

The needs of the displaced persons have been exerting undue pressure on the greatly reduced resources of the country, thus, hindering the rate of economic development. Traditionally, the Cyprus family has always been closely tied to inherited land. Social problems of enormous magnitude were created from the uprooting and breakup of families and communities as well as of massive emigration.

But the most alarming consequence of the invasion has been the systematic change of the historic demographic composition of the country by means of the illegal transfer of alien settlers from Turkey and the consequent mass exodus of the indigenous Turkish Cypriot population. It is estimated that today the number of foreign settlers and soldiers in the occupied areas of Cyprus is at least as large as that of the local Turkish Cypriot population.

As a result of the above, the Government's efforts to implement a rational population policy are seriously impaired.

Mr. Chairman,

Cyprus shares the worldwide anxiety for action on the problem of

accelerating population growth. We believe that problems such as these must become the concern of all countries, developed and developing, poor and rich, and must be approached in a well-coordinated multi-dimensional Action Plan. This can only be achieved and sustained in conditions of peace, security for all nations and respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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For further information, please contact: [popin@undp.org](mailto:popin@undp.org)  
POPIN Gopher site: <gopher://gopher.undp.org/11/ungophers/popin>  
POPIN WWW site: <http://www.undp.org/popin>